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NASA'S New Suborbital Center of Excellence at New Mexico State University Dedicated

Minority students will now have a new avenue for education and career opportunities through a unique partnership between NASA and New Mexico State University.

NASA Goddard Space Flight Center's Wallops Flight Facility and New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, N.M., held a dedication ceremony for the nation's only Suborbital Center of Excellence on April 24. The Center is a component of the New Mexico Aerospace Institute and will be dedicated to the improvement of minority student education and career opportunities, with a focus on suborbital science and engineering opportunities.

"This is an exciting endeavor that will sponsor outreach programs for students in kindergarten through the post-graduate level and will provide them with a better understanding of NASA's programs," said Bernice Merritt, Balloon Program Office Business Manager at Wallops.



Steve Smith, Chief, Balloon Program Office, talks to students about the scientific balloon program.

The mission of the Suborbital Center of Excellence (SCE) is to promote science and engineering education and outreach, with the objective of increasing the number of college graduates who have an interest in suborbital programs as a career choice. The SCE will be dedicated to the improvement of education for minorities focusing on engineering disciplines relevant to suborbital programs.

Through a \$700,000, three-year grant from NASA, New Mexico State University's Physical Science Laboratory (PSL) will establish and operate the Center and team with the Science Education Alliance, a nonprofit organization, to develop projects for public school students.

The Center will sponsor student research projects at NMSU, support student co-op positions at NASA Wallops, provide grants to faculty members who involve students in relevant research and promote projects in secondary and elementary schools.

"To us, it was a good match", said Steve Smith, Chief of NASA's Balloon Program Office. "We have had a very close partnership with New Mexico State and PSL for a long time and we were looking for a university environment because that's where our nation's future scientists and engineers will come from."

New Mexico State University, a Hispanic Serving Institution, has a strong relationship with NASA through participation in the Scientific Balloon Program by the University's Physical Science Laboratory (PSL), the Sounding Rocket Program, and the Space Grant Consortium. PSL operates NASA's National Scientific Balloon Facility, in Palestine, Texas, and also is involved in NASA's suborbital sounding rocket program.

"Suborbital programs include high-altitude scientific balloons, sounding rockets that are launched into the upper atmosphere for scientific research, uninhabited aerial vehicles (UAVs) and other aircraft," said PSL's Stephen

Hottman, who will serve as Director of the Center.

Two industry leaders in the suborbital field, Southwest Research Institute of San Antonio and Raven Industries of Sulphur Springs, Texas, will help the Center develop its programs.

"We are seeking strategic partnerships with other aerospace companies and government agencies", said Hottman.

For further information on NASA's Scientific Balloon Program, visit the Wallops web site at: <http://www.wff.nasa.gov>

For further information on New Mexico State University visit: <http://www.nmsu.edu>

Wallops Shorts.....

Appointments

Tripp Ransone has been appointed Acting Chief of the Sounding Rockets Program Office (SRPO). He will serve in this position until a permanent placement is named and continue to serve as Assistant Chief for SRPO.

Dwayne Morgan has been selected Associate Branch Head of the Real-Time Software Engineering Branch (Code 584) at Wallops.

On the Road

Ed Parrott, Wallops Teacher-on-Loan, gave a Space Experiment Module presentation for 9th and 10th grade students at Parkside High School, Salisbury, Md., on April 17.

Randy Carrier, NSROC, conducted an Education Outreach Workshop in Florence, S.C., April 15 to 18. Approximately 365 students between grades 4 and 12 from Wilson High School, Florence Christian School, Trinity Collegiate School and McLaurin Elementary School attended.

Bob Reynolds, NASA Facilities Management and Jan Jackson and Sue Gilmore, NSROC, served as judges for the Eastern Shore Science Fair held at the Eastern Shore Community College on April 20. Betty Flowers and Keva Scarborough, NASA Public Affairs Office, and Bob Marshall, Virginia Space Flight Academy, provided exhibits for the event.

Keith Koehler, NASA Public Affairs Office, and Ed Parrott, Wallops Teacher-on-Loan, staffed an exhibit at the Salisbury Zoo Earth Day Celebration held April 20. The event was attended by approximately 5,000 people.

Steve Smith and Bernice Merritt, Balloon Program Office; Roy Tolbert, Carrier Systems Branch and Betty Flowers, Public Affairs Office attended the dedication of NASA's new Suborbital Center of Excellence at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, N.M. on April 24. They staffed an exhibit and spoke to approximately 500 students.

Tracy Gibb and Randy Carrier, NSROC, presented an outreach program to 144 students at St. Andrews School, Waynesboro, Pa., on April 26.

May is Asian Heritage Month

Environmental Gets Good Report

The NASA Wallops Flight Facility recently passed the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality’s (VDEQ) annual Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Hazardous Waste Management Program audit and inspection. According to the Environmental Office, WFF received a report of 100% compliance with no findings. The inspection was conducted by Lisa Silvia, VDEQ Auditor, who recently received “EPA Region III, 2002 Inspector of the Year” award.

“The WFF Environmental Office maintains high programmatic standards and it is with the concerted efforts of Marianne Simko, EG&G Environmental Engineer and Bonnie Crawford, NASA Environmental Office, that Wallops retains a high degree of compliance. We thank them for a job well done,” said Bill Bott, Head Wallops Environmental Office.

EG&G supports the Environmental Office through a sub-contract with CUBE Corp. under the Wallops Institutional Consolidated Contract.



Bonnie Crawford, Wallops Environmental Office (left) provides NASA support for RCRA and Hazardous Waste Program compliance. Marianne Simko, (right) Environmental Engineer with EG & G, serves as the contractor support Hazardous Waste Program Manager.

Digital photo by Donna Hughes

Recreational Use of Wallops Island

Access to Wallops Island for recreational purposes is permitted during non-operational hours between sunrise and sunset.

Launch and other operational activities may require closure of the Island for recreational use outside of normal operational hours. Island closures will be announced and updated on the Operations Schedule line (757) 824-1176.

Employees should be aware that piping plover habitats on Wallops Island are off limits from through September 1. At the north end of Wallops, the plover habitat begins at the beach cable barrier and extends north. At the south end, the plover habitat begins immediately south of Camera Station Z-100.

Pets are not allowed on Wallops at any time.

Daughters to Work Day



Digital photo by Charles Lipsett

NASA, NOAA and the Navy at Wallops Flight Facility hosted approximately 90 students during Take Our Daughters to Work Day on April 25. The students in grades 4 through 12 participated in scheduled activities throughout the day and also visited the work area of their sponsors.

One activity was the planting of “space flown” wildflower seeds at the NASA Visitor Center (above). The seeds were prepared for flight during the 2001 Daughters Day activities and flown in space as part of the Space Shuttle mission in December 2001.

May Events at the Visitor Center

May 2 – Space Day

Children of all ages can learn to make and fly a bottle rocket between 10 a.m. and noon. Please bring an empty 2-liter soda bottle to this program, all other materials will be provided by the VC.

May 4 – Model Rocket Launch

A model rocket launch will be held at 1 p.m. Models of various rockets will be launched. Model rocketeers are invited to bring their own rockets and launch them. The launch will be canceled if it is raining or winds exceed 18 mph.

Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Arnold Richardson who died April 24 in his residence near Exmore. Richardson retired from NASA Wallops Flight Facility and worked for a number of years on the Island in the Vehicle Assembly and Launch Group. He is survived by his wife, Bette, two sons, a daughter and two grandchildren.

Robert W. Cobb, NASA Inspector General

Following nomination by President George Bush and confirmation by the U.S. Senate, Robert W. Cobb took office as NASA’s Inspector General on April 22, 2002. In a formal ceremony in the NASA Administrator’s office, Cobb was sworn in by the White House Counsel, Judge Alberto Gonzales.

Cobb was previously Associate Counsel to the President. In this role, he handled the administration of the White House ethics program under the supervision of the Counsel to the President and was responsible for administration of the conflict of interest and financial disclosure clearance processes for candidates for nomination to Senate-confirmed positions.

Prior to joining the Office of the Counsel to the President in January 2001, Cobb worked for almost nine years at the United States Office of Government Ethics. Prior to Government service, he worked for five years as an associate attorney at Ober, Kaler, Grimes & Shriver. Cobb is a 1986 graduate, cum laude, from George Washington University’s National Law Center, and a 1982 graduate, cum laude, from Vanderbilt University.

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Editor

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